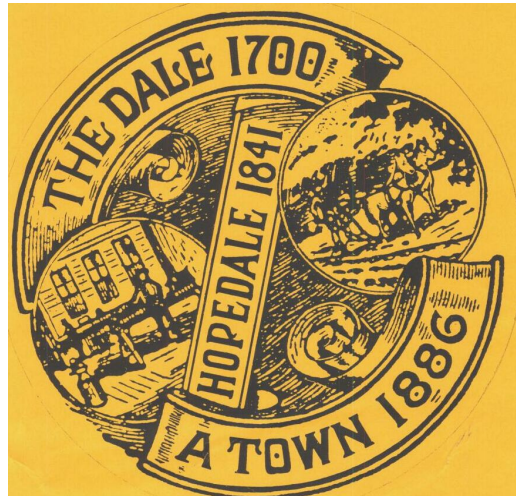


# HOPEDALE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## BULLYING PREVENTION & INTERVENTION PLAN

Revised June 2021

**The School Committee of the Hopedale Public Schools approved this plan on June 10, 2014. The plan is reviewed annually.**

## **Hopedale Public Schools Bullying Policy**

### **PRIORITY STATEMENT:**

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber-bullying. The Hopedale Public Schools are committed to working with students, parents, staff, and law enforcement agencies, including the Hopedale Police Department and the District Attorney's Office, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. The building principals are responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan except when a reported bullying incident involves the principal or assistant principal as the alleged aggressor. In such cases the Superintendent or Director of Pupil Personnel Services shall be responsible for investigating the report, and take other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged victim. The term "building principals" includes the Director of Bright Beginnings Center.

This Plan is updated to reflect M.G.L. c. 71,370 as amended by Sections 72-74 of Chapter 38 of the Acts of 2013, which changed the definition of "perpetrator" (aggressor) to include "a member of a school staff, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional." The amendment also made the plan applicable to school staff, including but not limited to, the individuals listed in the amended perpetrator (aggressor) definition.

Additionally, on April 24, 2014, Governor Patrick signed into law "An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools," Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014, which legislation expands the protections of the 2010 anti-bullying law. This law goes into effect on July 24, 2014. This new law revises certain provisions of the current anti-bullying law, G.L c. 71, 380, and adds several new subsections to the statute. The four main components of the new law include: 1. It requires the school's anti-bullying plans to recognize that certain enumerated categories of students may be more susceptible to bullying, including LGBTQ students; 2. It requires school districts to annually report bullying incident data to DESE; 3. it requires DESE to develop and school districts to administer surveys at least once every four years on the climate of the school district and prevalence of bullying; and 4. It grants DESE the power to investigate certain alleged incidents of bullying. The law also permits the school district to "adopt an anti-bullying seal to represent the district's or school's commitment to bullying prevention and intervention."

**BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE,**  
**ADOPTED JUNE 1, 2010 and revised on June 10, 2014**

It is the policy of the Hopedale School District to take proactive, reasonable measures designed to provide a learning and working atmosphere for students, employees, and other members of the school community free from sexual harassment, bullying, hazing, and intimidation. These terms are referenced herein as “harassment” which is more particularly defined below. The school district in the strongest possible terms condemns harassment, whether based on race, color, creed, national origin, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or any other reason.

It is a violation of policy for any member of a school staff, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity, paraprofessional or other employee, or any student or other member of the school community, to engage in or condone harassment in school, on school grounds, or at or in a school-related function, activity, communication or contact, or to fail to report or otherwise take reasonable corrective measures when they become aware of an incident of harassment.

This policy is not designed or intended to, nor shall it limit, the school’s authority to take disciplinary or remedial action when such harassment occurs out of school, but has sufficient nexus to school under applicable law, or is disruptive to an employee’s or student’s work or participation in school-related activities.

Reports of harassment, including but not limited to cyber-bullying by electronic or other means, occurring in or out of school will be reviewed and when a sufficient nexus to school or school-related work exists, will result in discipline.

It is the responsibility of every employee, student, and parent to recognize acts of harassment and take reasonable action to see that the applicable policies and procedures of this school district are implemented. All members of the school community are and must act as partners in such efforts if we are to have any reasonable chance of success in preventing or minimizing activity of this type, which is harmful to both the victim (target) and the perpetrator (aggressor). The children attending our schools are in critical, formative stages of their lives. To the extent that we, working together, are able to show them a better way, they will reap immeasurable, lifelong benefits.

Any employee or student who believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment has the right to file a complaint and to receive reasonably prompt and appropriate handling of the complaint. While proper enforcement of this policy foreseeably may require disclosure of any or all information received, all reasonable efforts will be made to maintain confidentiality to the extent consistent with such enforcement.

The building principals and the Director of Pupil Personnel Services shall be responsible for assisting employees and students seeking guidance or support in addressing matters relating to any form of harassment. Procedures will be followed by the principal or designee or the Superintendent or Director of Pupil Personnel Services when the principal is the alleged aggressor.

Specific staff training will be conducted annually, and the administration will target specific grade levels and courses for inclusion of student safety training.

## **PROHIBITIONS AND DEFINITIONS**

Harassment, including bullying, may take a variety of forms. It is utterly unacceptable in a school or work environment. As a result, no student, member of the school staff, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity, paraprofessional or other employee, nor other member of the school community shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying in any public educational institute.

“Harassment” including “Bullying”, the latter including but not limited to “Cyber-Bullying”, as used in this policy, means an unwelcome written, electronic, verbal or physical communication, act or gesture which: (1) reasonably causes a student or employee to feel coerced, intimidated, harassed or threatened and (2) under the circumstances foreseeably may cause: (a) a reasonable person to suffer physical or emotional harm, or (b) damage to a student’s or employee’s property, or (c) a disruptive or hostile school environment. The behavior must interfere with an employee’s ability to perform his or her duties or with a student’s academic performance or ability to learn, or interfere with a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from services, activities, or privileges:

1. that are being offered by or through the district; or
2. during any district-related educational program or activity; or
3. while in school, on or using school district property or equipment, in a school vehicle, on a school bus, at school-designated bus stops, at school-sponsored activities, at school-sanctioned events; or
4. through the use of data, telephone or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network or any public institute related to or provided or facilitated by the district; or
5. in circumstances otherwise having a sufficient nexus with the school district.

Electronic communication as used in this policy means any communication through an electronic device, including but not limited to a telephone, cellular phone, computer or pager.

## **BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

On May 3, 2010 Governor Patrick signed an *Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*. This new law prohibits bullying and retaliation in all public and private schools, and requires schools and school districts to take certain steps to address bullying incidents. Relevant sections of the law (M.G.L. c. 71, §37O) are described below.

Additionally, on April 24, 2014, Governor Patrick signed into law “An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools,” Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014, which legislation expands the protections of the 2010 anti-bullying law. This law goes into effect on July 24, 2014. This new law revises certain provisions of the current anti-bullying law and adds several new subsections to the statute. The four main components of the new law include: 1. It requires school’s anti-bullying plans to recognize that certain enumerated categories of students may be more susceptible to bullying, including LGBTQ students; 2. It requires school districts to annually report bullying incident data to DESE; 3. it requires DESE to develop and school districts to administer surveys at least once every four years on the climate of the school district and prevalence of bullying; and 4. It grants DESE the power to investigate certain alleged incidents of bullying. The law also permits the school district to “adopt an anti-bullying seal to represent the district’s or school’s commitment to bullying prevention and intervention.”

These requirements will be included in the Hopedale Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The Plan will include the requirements of the new law, and also information about the policies and procedures that Hopedale will follow to prevent bullying and retaliation, or to respond to it when it occurs. In developing the Plan, we must consult with school and local community members, including staff, and parents and guardians.

## **DEFINITIONS**

Perpetrator (aggressor) is a student or staff member who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.

Bullying is the repeated use of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target’s property; (ii) places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property; (iii) creates a hostile environments at school for the target; (iv) infringes on the rights of the target at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Bullying includes cyber-bullying.

Cyber-bullying is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings.

Hostile Environment is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student’s education.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

A Vulnerable Student is any student who is more susceptible to bullying, including but not limited to students with disabilities, LGBTQ students and others.

School Staff, includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

### **REPORTING BULLYING**

Anyone, including a parent, guardian, student, or employee can report bullying or retaliation that they have witnessed. Reports can be made in writing, orally, or anonymously to a building principal, Director of Pupil Personnel Services or his/her designee. Students, who believe that they are the target of bullying, observe an act of bullying or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are obligated to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying. Employees should report all incidents of bullying to the Director of Pupil Personnel Services.

A member of the school staff is required to report immediately any instance of bullying or retaliation to the building principal, Director of Pupil Personnel Services or his/her designee, if they witness or become aware of bullying or retaliation. The district has created reporting and documentation forms for students, staff members and administrators. Annual training on the use of these forms will be provided.

In addition, at the beginning of each school year, the school or district will provide the school community, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, paraprofessionals, students and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation.

### **ANONYMOUS REPORTING**

To assist in this manner, the Hopedale Public Schools have created an anonymous online bullying reporting form. The form is available for students, parents, and community members through the individual websites for each school to anonymously report bullying and/or retaliation. Anonymous reports are received by a specified guidance counselor at each site who initiates the investigative process following the guidelines established through the incident reporting form. Staff may also report incidents in writing anonymously to the Director of Pupil Personnel Services.

### **RESPONDING**

When the building principal, Director of Pupil Personnel Services or his/her designee receives a report, he or she shall promptly conduct an investigation. For students: If the building principal or designee determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, he or she shall (i) notify the parents or guardians of the target, and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation; (ii) notify the parents or guardians of an aggressor; (iii) take appropriate disciplinary action; and (iv) notify the local law enforcement agency if the building principal or designee, believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor. For staff: If the Director of Pupil Personnel or designee determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, he or she shall (i) notify the target and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation; (ii) notify the aggressor of the actions taken; (iii) complete a written report making recommendations to the Superintendent for further action steps, if deemed necessary.

### **REPORTER / WITNESS SAFETY**

The Principal, Director of Pupil Personnel Services or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student or school staff member who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student or school staff member who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student or school staff member who provides information during an investigation, or a student or school staff member who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

\*Refer to chart on page 8

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT STAFF**

The district must provide ongoing professional development to increase the skills of all staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. The content of such professional development is to include, but not be limited to: (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; (ii) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents; (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying; (iv) *research* findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment and with a particular focus on the needs of students who have a disability that may affect social skills development; (v) information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and (vi) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.

### **APPLICATION**

This policy applies to all sites and activities under the supervision and control of the Hopedale Public Schools, or where it has jurisdiction under the law. The policy applies to all students, school committee members, school employees, independent contractors, town employees, school volunteers, visitors, parents and legal guardians of students,

whose conduct occurs on school premises or in school-related activities, including school-related transportation. Nothing in this policy is designed or intended to limit the school district's authority to discipline or take remedial action under General Laws Chapter 71 Sections 37H or 37H 1/2, M.G.L. c. 71, Sections 41 and 42, M.G.L. c. 76 Section 5, or other applicable laws, or local school or district policies, or collective bargaining agreements, in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether this policy covers the conduct. It is the responsibility of every employee, student and parent to recognize acts of harassment and take every action necessary to ensure that the applicable policies and procedures of this school district are implemented.

### **DISCIPLINARY AND CORRECTIVE ACTION**

Violation of this policy is a serious offense. Violators may be subject to appropriate disciplinary and/or corrective action to stop the conduct and prevent its recurrence. The school district is committed to protecting a complainant, and other similarly-situated individuals, from bullying in the future. Procedural manuals containing responsibilities of staff and students, reporting procedures, complaint process, resolution, and protection against retaliation shall be in place at each level. This policy shall be printed/listed in each school handbook/webpage.

- It is a violation of this policy for any administrator, teacher or other employee, or any student to engage in or condone harassment in school or to fail to report or otherwise take reasonable corrective measures when they become aware of an incident of harassment.
- This policy is not designed or intended to limit the school's authority to take disciplinary action or take remedial action when such harassment occurs out of school but has a nexus to school, or is disruptive to an employee's or student's work or participation in school related activities.
- Reports of cyber-bullying by electronic or other means, occurring in or out of school, will be reviewed and, when a nexus to work or school exists, will result in discipline. Parents of students alleged to have engaged in cyber harassment will be invited to attend a meeting at which the activity, words, or images subject to the complaint will be reviewed. A student disciplined for cyber-bullying will not be readmitted to the regular school program until his or her parent(s) attend such meeting.
- The building principal, Director of Pupil Personnel Services or his/her designee shall be responsible for assisting employees and students seeking guidance or support in addressing matters relating to any form of harassment.
- Strategies for protecting the target and the reporter: Each school will employ clear procedures for restoring a sense of safety for a target and/or reporter in assessing their need for protection including, but not limited to, strong disciplinary



procedures, parental contact and availability of administration/counselors for support.

- Referrals for appropriate family members to outside counseling services, as identified on each school's guidance web page and law enforcement agencies, including the Hopedale Police Department and the District Attorney's Office.
- Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.
- Students with disabilities are subject to the same type of disciplinary procedures as their typical peers. However, it has been established that exclusion from school for more than 10 days amounts to a change in placement. As a result, before a school can contemplate disciplinary decisions that may result in a change of placement, a number of procedural safeguards must be followed.

Student Disciplinary Actions	Remediation Actions	"Target" Safety	Reporter/Witness Safety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admonishment, warning</li> <li>• Parental contact/letter</li> <li>• Temporary removal from the classroom</li> <li>• Loss of privileges</li> <li>• Classroom or administrative detention</li> <li>• In-school suspension during the school week</li> <li>• Out-of-school suspension</li> <li>• Student Re-entry Plan</li> <li>• Legal action</li> <li>• Expulsion or exclusion</li> <li>• </li> </ul> <p><i>*School Staff disciplinary actions are outlined in the Teacher Handbook</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings between parents</li> <li>• Counseling</li> <li>• Revision of IEP, if applicable</li> <li>• Behavioral Intervention Plan (for repeat offenders)</li> <li>• Education, including strategies to remediate behaviors</li> </ul> <p><i>*School Staff Remediation actions are outlined in the Teacher Handbook</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines for avoiding further unnecessary contact with the target</li> <li>• Clarification about who will be notified</li> <li>• Notify staff about incident and danger of further contact</li> <li>• Strategies to avoid further bullying</li> <li>• Identifying trusted adults and "safe areas"</li> <li>• Education about rights to be free of retaliation and reasonable expectations about social consequences for being part of a bullying investigation</li> <li>• Periodic check-ins</li> <li>• School community meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an individualized safety plan</li> <li>• Identify a "safe person"</li> <li>• Alter the aggressor's schedule and access to reporter</li> <li>• Predetermined seating arrangements</li> <li>• Increased supervision and situational awareness</li> </ul>

It is equally important for all members of the school community to understand that conflict is not automatically synonymous with bullying. Arguing, bantering back-and-forth, ignoring, roughhousing and fighting, while potentially serious forms of conflict are not necessarily instances of bullying. Bullying is characterized by intention, repetition, and power imbalance. Not every conflict meets these criteria.

The Hopedale Public Schools' response to bullying actions will include, when appropriate, referral to a law enforcement agency. The Hopedale Public Schools will

support this policy in all aspects of its activities, including its curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parental involvement.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is prohibited.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The regulations address confidentiality at 603 CMR 49.07, which states:

1. A principal may not disclose information from a student record of a target or aggressor to a parent or guardian unless the information is about the parent's own child.
2. A principal may disclose a determination of bullying or retaliation to a local law enforcement agency under 603 CMR 49.06 without the consent of a student or his or her parent. The principal shall communicate with law enforcement officials in a manner that protects the privacy of targets, student witnesses, and aggressors to the extent practicable under the circumstances.
3. A principal may disclose student record information about a target or aggressor to appropriate parties in addition to law enforcement in connection with a health or safety emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals as provided in 603 CMR 23.07(4)(e) and 34 CFR 99.31(a)(10) and 99.36. 603 CMR 49.07(3) is limited to instances in which the principal has determined there is an immediate and significant threat to the health or safety of the student or other individuals. It is limited to the period of emergency and does not allow for blanket disclosure of student record information. The principal must document the disclosures and the reasons that the principal determined that a health or safety emergency exists.

### **RETALIATION**

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying shall be prohibited.

### **TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Annual training will be provided for school staff employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying. Training will include staff duties, an overview of the steps that the building principal, Director of Pupil Personnel Services or his/her designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school. Our goal is to build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying.

Age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention has been incorporated into the curriculum for kindergarten through grade 12 students. See the charts on page 10.

GRADE LEVEL	PROGRAM	INTENDED OUTCOMES
Grade K-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Circle, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)</li> <li>• Supplemental Lessons: prepared by school psychologist, school adjustment counselor, health teacher and PBIS Team.</li> <li>• Grade 5 – Internet Safety and Cyber-bullying Presentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following classroom and school-wide rules</li> <li>• Cooperative classroom</li> <li>• Demonstrating kindness</li> <li>• Understanding and accepting differences</li> <li>• Dealing with teasing</li> <li>• Understanding and expressing feelings</li> <li>• Problem solving processes</li> <li>• Leadership skills</li> <li>• Identifying bullying and teasing behaviors</li> <li>• Courage and the role of the bystander</li> </ul>
Grade 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsive Classroom, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)</li> <li>• Supplemental Lessons: prepared by school psychologist, school adjustment counselor, health teacher, and PBIS Team</li> <li>• Internet Safety and Cyber-bullying Presentation</li> </ul>	(Grades 5 and 6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet safety</li> <li>• Knowledge of cyber-bullying laws</li> </ul>

GRADE LEVEL	PROGRAM OBJECTIVES/TOPICS
Grades 7 and 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of school reporting process</li> <li>• Teaching common language</li> <li>• Participating in role-plays</li> <li>• Conflict resolution skills</li> <li>• Empowering students to Recognize, Act and Respond</li> <li>• Power imbalance recognition</li> </ul>
Grades 9 and 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of school reporting process</li> <li>• Review common language</li> <li>• Exploring case studies of bullying</li> <li>• Empathy activities (FAT city)</li> <li>• Power imbalance recognition</li> <li>• Anger management strategies</li> </ul>
Grades 11 and 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review common vocabulary</li> <li>• Anti-bullying legislation</li> <li>• Tolerance and diversity</li> <li>• Mentoring elementary level students</li> <li>• Creating anti-bullying resources</li> </ul>

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

As required by M.G.L. c. 71B §3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. Individual schools have specific programs in place to address anti-bullying. These programs encompass elements of our Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan to include clear procedures for staff, students, parents, guardians, and others to report, respond to, and investigate reports of bullying or retaliation; and strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation. This is in addition to any social skills goals/benchmarks that may have been deemed necessary by the Team and included in a student's IEP.

## **PARENT EDUCATION AND RESOURCES**

Each school will offer educational programs for parents or guardians that are focused on ways that families can support bullying prevention and intervention efforts related to school-based bullying, cyber-bullying, and the dynamics of bullying. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the PTO, PACE, SEPAC, and School Councils on a yearly basis. The District will provide resources for parents on each school's website including information and guidelines regarding the monitoring of their children's use of technology at home.

Upon investigation and determination that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Principal, Director of Pupil Personnel Services or his/her designee shall promptly notify the parents of the target and the aggressor of the determination and the school district or school's procedures for responding to the bullying or retaliation. The Principal or designee shall inform the target's parent of actions that school officials will take to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. Such notification to a parent about an incident or a report of bullying or retaliation will comply with confidentiality requirements of the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations, 603 CMR 23.00, and the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations, 34 CFR Part 99, as set forth in 603 CMR 49.07.

## **REMINDERS TO ALL STAFF**

**Do not ignore bullying:** Bullies count on adults to ignore bullying behaviors, and this allows them to continue bullying activities. (Steiner, A. 2002)

**Intervene immediately; bullying is common, but not benign.** Bullies are much more likely to grow up to have criminal or violent behaviors. Targets of bullies suffer disproportionately from mental health problems.

**Separate alleged bully and target:** Do not use mediation or attempt to force them to confront one another.

**Bullying is different from conflict.** Conflict is an equal-power quarrel or problem between two students. Bullying is abuse; it occurs when a socially powerful (popular or feared) student mentally or physically abuses a weaker (fearful) student, for the purposes of making them afraid and hurt.

**Stay neutral and calm.** The tone you take with students during investigations will affect your ability to defuse the bullying.

**Don't make promises** or deals until your investigation is complete.

**Reassure reporters and targets** that they have done the right thing by reporting. Make sure they know they will be protected from retaliation.

**Empower the aggressors to change.** Remind aggressors that they have power to stop the bullying. Teach them strategies to stop (e.g., “for now, stay off of Facebook”).

**Maintain confidentiality but ACT.** It is important to protect reporters from retaliation, but information on bullying **MUST** be acted upon. There are no “off-the-record” conversations.

**Be objective in your note-taking.** Your emails and the notes you take in meetings about students become part of their official record.

**Be timely!** The faster you talk to all students involved, the less likely the students will feel social pressure to change their stories,